CM 175 462 [644] arms. It is true that all this work which the Indian women must perform is made more tolerable by the fact that they are very strong and robust. Proof of this robustness is what they do as soon as they give birth: going to the river or stream with their newborn child they go into the water and swim about and wash themselves thoroughly, and do not experience the least harm as a result. However, should the husband capture a woman from some Indian nation or from among the CM Spaniards, her life is spared so that she may serve his wife as a slave, and him as a concubine—but he must be secretive in his relationships [595] with the captured woman for the wives are extraordinarily jealous and will make things difficult for the husband should he make advances CM towards a Spanish woman. . . .

CM 175 "Smallpox is a great scourge to these nations, and makes [644] terrible inroads into them because they have no doctors other than the old fakers, and if the latter do not cure the sick person, and they CM usually don't, then all will abandon him to his fate. When anyone dies, [764] those who happen to be present open up a grave for him on the very spot, bury him stretched full-length, stick a spear into the ground over his resting place and hang a Christian's or some other enemy's skull on the shaft's end; then they desert the place and never return to it while CM memory of it lasts. Not even a trace of religion has been found among [771] them, rather are they perfect athiests without the least knowledge about the afterlife or the immortality of the soul. They have a certain re- CM spect for their female witchdoctors, more out of fear of what they may 175 do to them than from any good they may hope to receive from them. 756 These witchdoctors try to make the others believe that they hold in their hands the power to heal or to make sick, and these are the ones who resist the Gospel most vigorously, using their influence to keep their followers from receiving Holy Baptism or allowing their children to receive it, and persuading them that baptism will kill them. To this end, to bolster their arguments, they take advantage of what happens in any mission post when the missionaries only baptize those who are about to die, and as the Indians then usually see such a person die, the noxious error becomes more firmly rooted in their untutored minds." "Descripción del Chaco" [Chorographic Description of the Chaco] page 82.

CM 114 This account by the Missionary Fathers is confirmed by what has been observed by travelers who have visited these same Indians in more modern times, even in the present day. [579]

881 hovel as was performed for the ripening of the algarroba."

"Marriages have no special ritual of any importance. They
582 do not marry close consanguineous relatives but do so with in-laws. Although they usually marry another member of their own nation, they are not forbidden to marry those of another, especially of the Toba nation. Parental authority has no say whatever in the childrens' marriages, and these latter marry as they wish to, when they wish to and whom they wish. The woman requires the groom to be a good fisherman and he that the bride not be too much of a homebody but be willing to wander about the countryside in search of food."

"The marriage being done in secret, the couple go off to the
585 591 forest for five or six days. On returning to the village they live openly in the hut which they choose to occupy, although the normal thing is for the bride to go to live in the hut of her parents-in-law."

"Polygamy is very rare and it is most uncommon to come
585 586 across a man having two wives simultaneously. However they do not recognize conjugal indisolubility and the younger persons quite frequently divorce each other. This is not so apt to happen among older men, although a whim is often enough to bring a divorce about. Adultery is considered a crime and is not very common. The wife of
[684] the man involved will invariably avenge herself upon the adultress, going to her hut publicly, shouting at her wildly and disfiguring her by giving her a sound beating with a stick in the presence of the whole village which congregates to jeer.

"When pregnant the woman is not given the least considera-
843 846 tion. After bearing her child she lies on the sand for a few days while her husband abstains from fishing and from all other activities."
[595]

"The mothers are very loving in bringing up their children.
854 While they are little they seldom part from them, and amidst the burdensome domestic chores and daily foraging trips into the country-
[482] side they carry their babies about with them in a wide transverse swathe. When the children are a little bigger they carry them on one
[553] or other of their shoulders. When they are two or three years old they are given names."

"Abortion is very frequent, particularly among the unmarried
647 women, and it is brought on by their striking their abdomens or by having some other person strike them. Infanticide is rare but it happens now and then that a very small suckling child is put to death so that, buried at its dead mother's side, it may receive milk from her."

291 or netting, which reaches down to their knees or a little less. Some men of more sophisticated taste sometimes put on a sort of waistcoat, hand woven from garavata fiber and painted. Of the same material [415] and made in the same way is the bag which they are in the habit of carrying at their side, in which, when they travel, they keep their flint and steel or the fiber and wax for their arrows and other small things which they use. When at home, at least at nighttime, they wear no clothes—possibly to keep from damaging them."

622 621 "There is no use looking for chiefs or captains with any authority, for among them there are neither any who give orders nor any who obey them—they only have friendly respect for, and sometimes follow the advice of, someone among them who enjoys a certain prestige or who is very likeable. In time of war or common danger, some make limited alliances between a few huts only, for sake of unity." [602]

582 "They marry without any visible ceremony and without formalities of any sort; nor do the parents play a role in the matrimony of their children, who marry when they wish to and to whom they wish—the women always give preference to a man who is adept at fishing, and the men seek out those women who are active and diligent in their search for fruit. Once a man and a woman have come 585 591 to an understanding they go off together into the forests for a few days, doing whatever they see fit to do, and return then to the encampment where they either set up for themselves or go to live with the woman's ● 595 parents-in-law. Few indeed are those who have more than one wife, even though divorce, among the younger set, is frequent. Adultery 837 684 also appears to be rare; the women do not consent to others having affairs with their husbands, on the contrary, they go to their houses and insult, threaten and fight them, a thing which often proves highly amusing to the men, women and children of the same camp, all of whom come out of their abodes to see the gestures and grimaces which the two women perform for each other's benefit, laughing uproariously and applauding noisily and gleefully the name calling and cursing, blows and kicks which they meet out to each other rather disgracefully.

774 "It would be useless to look for religious beliefs amongst a people so miserable, not to say stupid. It seems, nevertheless, that they do have some idea of the soul, which they call neusec, but about whose 776 ultimate destiny they have no clear idea. They also have a jumbled

Women are with them, also, a most important attraction or passion; and although a white person may consider her position an unenviable one as he sees her traveling beside her man under a huge load while he carries only his weapons, yet she is not treated any worse than the immense majority of women in our midst -- those women in our society who are able to pay others to work for them make up a numerically unimportant exception. 462

Furthermore when the Indians are on the move they are ever on the lookout for game and must be continually wary lest they be attacked. How then could the men be in a position to attack and also to defend themselves if they were loaded down by all their belongings?

The woman's role in Indian society is in perfect accord both with social needs and with her physical aptitude. She does not hunt, fish or fight, but takes care of the home, cooks for the family, and is always at work: She looks for roots and fruit in the forest; soaks chăguar leaves in water and spins twine from them; makes nets, bags and weaves; prepares food, repairs the home, ferments the beverages which the men drink; takes care of [183] provisions; helps her spouse in planting by placing seeds in the holes made in the skimpy trenches; takes care of the harvests...and is mother to her children.

In all the Indian camps which I have visited I have always been surprised at the continual round of labors performed by the women, who are always at work. In Mataco, "woman" is tziná and also quiécua or chécua, this last word also meaning "wife."

A man may have several wives, but only rarely does he have them all living under the same roof. The number of wives depends upon the husband's wealth and ability to support a number of families. There is no such thing as real wealth among these nomads, only wealth in movable possessions, if we may call them that, such as skins, cattle, and the ability to work and steal which the man may have. 595 422 556

Very few, possibly none, of the chiefs have only one wife. The wife may be repudiated and in that case can again call herself her own mistress; but only rarely does she remarry because it is usually the case that she has already lost her youthful attractions, because she does not give up hope that her husband will take her back, and because she is kept from so doing by the shame she would feel before the tribe. When a man repudiates his wife this almost always leads to quarrels and feuds between the families. 586

In places such as these in which women lose their attractions at an early age and in which men are decimated by the constant wars, the custom of polygamy is a social necessity for the tribe which would otherwise run out of members, and a physical necessity for the men and for many women who would otherwise stay single. Nevertheless there are not lacking loose women, free in their favors, for whom the Indians use the name of amoeccue.

The man is jealous and cruel to his wife if he suspects her of infidelity. While we were visiting the camp of Peilô we had the opportunity of hearing a husband, deep within one of the huts, beat and threaten his wife with death because she had been careless and fallen into the hands of a soldier. Nu-a-ilon-lá (I shall kill you) he ground out between his teeth. On another occasion a woman, after her husband had been absent for two years, took up with another man; the husband returned, lay in wait, ran after and caught his wife and slit her belly open with a knife before the whites could prevent it. This woman did not die and as soon as she was well returned to live with her would-be murderer.

When the Indians intend to get married they dye their cheeks and the region around the eyes red. The man will give his love a present at the time he makes his proposal and if the woman gives [184] an affirmative answer the man gives her a dowry of whatever he has, such as sheep, chickens, skins, etc.

If the families approve of the union the couple goes to live near one of them, should they not approve then the pair leave the hut and often even leave the camp. Once consent is granted, the nuptial ceremony is the act of consummation.

Among the Chiriguanos, when a man wants to ask for a girl's hand he places a bundle of firewood and a small deer or other provision at her door; if on the following morning the woman lights the fire and prepares a meal with the food supplied, the proposal is considered accepted and the suitor repairs to the table. Some people hold that this is also a Mataco custom, but the facts which I have been able to glean about the matter do not confirm this.

The Chiriguano chiefs, however, have a privilege, which is that they cannot be rejected by the women of their choice: this is a great stroke of luck for them. The chief reveals his inclination with the offering of a piece of meat or some other thing; the girl cooks it, and they then share both meal and bed. The chiefs, especially the

generals, that is the ones who have several camps under their command, have at least one wife in each camp. C 622

Two or three days after delivery, mother and child wash, the new mother resting for only that length of time. C M 846

The father acknowledges his child and takes it into his arms with the following words: "This is my child." In some tribes it is customary for the husband to take to his bed when his wife is in labor, as an act of acknowledgement; and among the Chiriguanos the man takes his place beside his wife and for three days is cared for as if he had... given birth to a child! Then he gets up, but does not make any trips or work until seven days have elapsed, after which period the wife also gets up and washes. While the couple is in labor they eat nothing but water and a pap made with corn and bean broth; they abstain from eating meat.

It is quite common for a man to have two or more sisters simultaneously as wives. I can also give assurance that every now and then a father will not disdain even his own daughter. If no one will acknowledge a child as his own the mother may kill it. M 595 [588] [847]

The Indians are very skilled midwives: the white settlers themselves use their services. It is said that they are extraordinarily expert in taking advantage of the precise moment of crisis, holding the patient in a more or less straight position, apparently even shaking her, but without doing her harm. To this activity they add words to which the Indians attribute [185] virtue and to which the whites, who do not understand them, ascribe even more. So is it always! M 844

Let it not be thought, however, that in the matter of love-making they limit their efforts to a more or less expressive pantomime. The fact is that they have words and expressions and a language which lend themselves admirably to amorous declarations and which they use. The harmoniousness of the Guaraní language is well known to all, it might even be said that it is too much so when used by the men and by the Chiriguanos, whose mother tongue it also is. But even the Matacos, the rude, unpolished Matacos who seem to be the last on the anthropological scale of all these South American Indians, have their harmonious expressions and the well-bred ideas which correspond to them. C M 832

I remember an occasion on board ship when there was among us a good looking Indian woman who was quiet, impassive and even M 832

584 chooses a husband for his daughter, but he would never go
585 against his wife's wish. The ceremony is not celebrated.
The son-in-law lives first at the hut of his wife's father where
he stays for three months at least, working for him. Later
591 he can build a hut for himself. The young couple live in a
separate compartment.

Nowadays either the bride follows the bridegroom or he
595 goes to live with her, according to circumstances. Ordinarily
men have only one wife, some have two, but never more.
[593] Except for adultery a husband never beats his wife. Although
837 a woman is exposed to a severe beating if her husband discovers that she has betrayed him, it does not prevent many women from doing so. A woman will choose a day when her husband is absent and then send a child to tell her lover that she is alone. A couple must not be seen together for
[519] there would be some gossip. A man generally leaves an unfaithful wife after beating her first. He challenges his
[831] rival and they fight with knives. The different »milks» must not be mixed up.

XVI. Chiefs

622 All the members of the tribe follow the *cacique* everywhere without protest. As for him, he is responsible for all the members of his group. If one of the latter has committed
[672] a theft, even outside of the tribe, the *cacique* will be arrested
[627] by the police. Quarrels among members of the same group are settled by the *cacique*. If a big *cacique* is killed in a
[726] fight his troop retreats immediately, even if the other *caciques* are still living.

XVII. War

726 In ancient times, when a young man was going to war,
825 he pinched the skin of his thigh and drove the sharpened bone of a jaguar into it. This operation was supposed to make the warrior courageous. Members of a war party did the same with a peccari's bone so they would be fierce,

832 use of all kinds of tricks and small stratagems to inflame desire in the men. It is during the dances held at night, more than at any other time, that one can see the maneuverings of the girls. The young men show more circumspection and have recourse to a go-between when they wish to make their passion known. They will send the girl they love a messenger carrying a torch or lamp. If the girl is willing she has only to follow the emissary.

584 It is not uncommon for the parents to take upon themselves the arrangement of a marriage. Should the union later be an unhappy one and end in divorce, one or the other of the couple will find consolation in saying: "I didn't want to marry, my parents are responsible."

591 In general residence in matrilocal, that is to say, the husband goes to live in his wife's parents' house. Nevertheless, it can happen, especially if the woman is older than her husband, that the wife goes to live with the man's family. But patrilocal residence is a rare occurrence.

[851] After the birth of a child, the new couple may build a separate house, but always in the woman's village. The Mataco young men of the Pilcomayo region who have married girls from the Bermejo have all taken up residence in this latter place.

606 Matrilocal residence presents the husband with certain problems. I have heard young men complain of this custom. They said that their parents-in-law would take possession of the fruits of their labor and of the hunt. It is not uncommon for a man to divorce his [586] wife in order to escape from the [13] tyranny of her family. Furthermore, the woman's parents are always ready to turn against their son-in-law should their daughter have some cause for complaint. A family always has something to gain from the marriage of a daughter for it supplies the aid of a man in the prime of life.

595 Polygamy seems to have been, in most cases, the prerogative of the chiefs. In San Patricio there was a chief with three wives. The erstwhile chief of San Andrés had two wives by whom he had had five children.

684 In a case of adultery the husband does not take the matter up with his wife but rather works out his rage on her lover. He may kill him or oblige him to pay indemnity. I know of a case in which a Mataco took possession of the wagon of another man who was accused of having had intimate relations with his wife.

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 SI7 Mataco SI7

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Fig. 3.—Normally separated during the day because of different occupations, the single family joins during the night in gossip and sleep. In winter the Mataco sleep indoor on platform beds, in summer normally in the open on furs and with a log as a pillow. Flash-phot. Fock.

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in their conversation and show no sign of affection. A man going out to hunt merely says: "I am off and shall return in 3–4 days". She says at most "Very good", and when he comes back there will be no form of greeting or conversation. Married couples who break this rule and evince great devotion or jealousy are not expected to remain together for any length of time, as in this way they will bind themselves to each other. This will stop them attending to their respective occupations which often take them in different directions. Devotion between man and wife, undoubtedly often present, belongs to the night only and is closely connected with the sexual life. It is as though the recollection of the first trial marriage has delineated a pattern to be followed; first the intimate, nocturnal meeting at the dancing-place and in the girl's home; then the sudden awakening to the demands of the father-in-law. It is a general feature with both children and adults that they are far more confident and daring by night than by day.

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The Mataco are monogamous. There are very few examples of men with two or three wives, and then it was always a matter of chiefs. The polygyny of chiefs is probably an ancient custom, as it is sanctioned in the account about the first appearance of woman. Incidentally, monogamy is strictly enforced, and no form of extra-marital sexual relations is socially sanctioned. In case of infidelity